



A CUP OF HEALTH WITH CDC

Healthy Kidneys

National Kidney Month, March 2015

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[Announcer] This program is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

[Dr. Gaynes] Welcome to *A Cup of Health with CDC*, a weekly feature of the *MMWR*, the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. I'm your host, Dr. Robert Gaynes.

Kidney disease is among the leading causes of death in the U.S. More than one in 10 people over the age of 20 are impacted by this condition, and most don't know it.

Nilka Rios Burrows is a researcher with CDC's National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. She's joining us today to discuss the risks for kidney disease. Welcome to the show, Nilka

[Ms. Burrows] Thank you.

[Dr. Gaynes] Nilka, let's start with what is kidney disease?

[Ms. Burrows] Kidney disease is a condition in which your kidneys are damaged and cannot filter blood as well as healthy kidneys. Because of this, wastes from the blood remain in the body and may cause other health problems. Without treatment, your diseased kidneys may stop working after a time, a condition called kidney failure. And once your kidneys fail, you either have to have regular dialysis in which a machine filters your blood like healthy kidneys would, or you have to have a kidney transplant.

[Dr. Gaynes] Well, what causes kidney disease?

[Ms. Burrows] Adults with diabetes or high blood pressure have a higher risk of developing kidney disease than people without these conditions. Other risk factors include cardiovascular disease, obesity, high cholesterol, lupus, and a family history of kidney disease. Your risk of developing kidney disease also increases with age, particularly after age 50, as these conditions are more common with older age. In fact, kidney disease is most common among adults older than 70 years.

[Dr. Gaynes] Are there any symptoms associated with kidney disease?

[Ms. Burrows] People with early kidney disease don't know that they have because they don't have symptoms or they don't feel sick. Actually, symptoms may not appear until the disease is very advanced or the kidneys are about to fail. When the kidneys fail, people may feel sick to their stomachs and tired all the time or their hands and feet may swell from the extra fluid in their bodies. The only to find out for sure whether you have kidney disease is through specific blood and urine tests that are very simple to do. So talk to your doctor about getting tested for kidney disease.

[Dr. Gaynes] Nilka, is any particular sex or race at higher risk for kidney disease?

[Ms. Burrows] Men with chronic kidney disease are 50 percent more likely than women to have kidney failure. Also, U.S. minority groups, such as African Americans, Hispanics, Native Americans and Asians, are more likely than whites to develop kidney failure. If you have kidney disease, talk to your doctor or health care provider. Ask questions. Engage in a one-on-one clear dialog about what you can do to take care of your kidneys and prevent kidney failure. Learn more about kidney health and keeping your kidneys healthy.

[Dr. Gaynes] Well, how can we prevent or decrease our chances of getting kidney disease?

[Ms. Burrows] If you have diabetes, keep your blood sugar level under control. If you have high blood pressure, keep your blood pressure under control. Other things that you can do to prevent or slow down kidney disease are things that you can do to lead healthier lives, such as stay active, do not smoke, eat healthy and keep your weight in check, and get checked and take your medicines regularly.

[Dr. Gaynes] Nilka, where can listeners get more information about kidney disease?

[Ms. Burrows] For more information about kidney disease, go to cdc.gov and in the search box, type “CKD.”

[Dr. Gaynes] Thanks, Nilka. I’ve been talking today with CDC’s Nilka Rios Burrows about the risks for kidney disease.

Remember, controlling diabetes and blood pressure can prevent or delay the onset of kidney disease. Check with your health care provider to see if you’re among the millions of Americans who have kidney disease or are at risk of developing it.

Until next time, be well. This is Dr. Robert Gaynes for *A Cup of Health with CDC*.

[Announcer] For the most accurate health information, visit www.cdc.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO.